



**For Immediate Release
January 15, 2024**

Maamwesying Ontario Health Team and Espanola Regional Hospital and Health Centre Officially Solidify Collaboration Agreement With Signing Ceremony

Maamwesying North Shore Community Health Services Inc., as a core partner of the Maamwesying Ontario Health Team and Espanola Regional Hospital and Health Centre, held a signing ceremony to renew their collaboration agreement on January 12th at the Community Hall in Sagamok Anishnawbek. This agreement is aimed at transforming health care for Indigenous peoples by embracing their unique cultural knowledge, traditional practices and improving access and awareness of Indigenous Health Services available in the Lacloche Foothills region.

While Espanola Regional Hospital and Health Centre has been an established collaborative partner of the Maamwesying Ontario Health Team since 2022, the decision to convene in person for an official signing ceremony further fortifies this agreement by integrating Anishinaabe traditions and customs.

The Maamwesying Ontario Health Team was announced in October of 2022 to seamlessly integrate health care services for clients in the communities of Atikameksheng Anishnawbek, Sagamok Anishnawbek, Serpent River First Nation, Mississauga First Nation, Thessalon First Nation, Garden River First Nation, Batchewana First Nation, Michipicoten First Nation, Chapleau Cree First Nation, Chapleau Ojibwe First Nation, and Brunswick House First Nation, as well as the urban Indigenous population in Sault Ste. Marie.

“With this agreement, Maamwesying Ontario Health Team and Espanola Regional Hospital and Health Centre, the healthcare hub of the Lacloche Foothills region, recognize the importance of Indigenous-driven health systems that are community-designed, innovative, and culturally safe. This agreement reaffirms the value of Indigenous peoples and their right to self-determination within the healthcare system. Together, we recognize the collective long-term goal of creating a healthcare system free from racism and discrimination,” said Carol Eshkakogan, Chief Executive Officer for Maamwesying North Shore Community Health Services Inc./ Chair of the Maamwesying Ontario Health Team Leadership Council.

The collaboration between Maamwesying and Espanola Regional Hospital and Health Centre is driven by a vision to provide coordinated and seamless health care, ensuring optimal outcomes for Indigenous patients and clients. This collaboration aims to improve access to quality care to improve outcomes and enhance patient care that is equitable and culturally safe, while actively involving Indigenous health leaders and advisors in the planning, design, delivery, and evaluation of health services to enhance the satisfaction and experience for patients, caregivers, and providers.

"On behalf of Espanola Regional Hospital and Health Centre, I am honoured to sign this agreement. Partnering with Maamwesying on our journey towards reconciliation is a significant step in strengthening our relationship to improve seamless and coordinated access to quality care, in a caring environment that is free of racism and discrimination. Building connections that guide our team's growth, learning, and respect for the traditional and cultural practices of Indigenous patients, residents and families across our health campus will help to shape our collective future. It gives our organization great pleasure to share in this agreement." Jane Battistelli, President and CEO of Espanola Regional Hospital and Health Centre.

By signing this agreement, Maamwesying and Espanola Regional Hospital and Health Centre are committing to work together to create culturally safe spaces within the healthcare system and improve care transitions so Indigenous patients have the support they need to access the right care at the right time.

Media Contacts:

Grace Swain
Communications and Media Specialist
Maamwesying Ontario Health Team
grace.swain@nmninoeyaa.ca

Terri Noble
Public Relations Coordinator
Espanola Regional Hospital & Health Centre
tnoble@erhhc.on.ca